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SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MOWAC DEPUTY MINISTER RE BROTHEL RAID

REF: A. ACCRA 107 B. ACCRA 130

¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On January 29, 2008, Ambassador Bridgewater met with Deputy Minister of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) Daniel Dugen and MOWAC International Desk Director Marilyn Amponsah Annan to discuss the January 19 raid on a brothel (ref B), including the care for the minor victims and areas of future cooperation in combating trafficking and child prostitution. MOWAC acknowledged serious shortcomings victim screening and assistance following the raid which permitted a number of minor victims to escape protective custody, and is preparing an-after action report to assess the situation. In light of the need for secure shelter accommodations for victims, MOWAC requested funding for permanent shelters. MOWAC strongly criticized the NGO "Enslavement Prevention Alliance West Africa" and its Executive Director Tatiana Kotlyarenko for leaking information to the media, for operating an unregistered NGO, and for publicly accusing MOWAC of mishandling the victims' care. Post is continuing discussions with the GoG to improve its capacity to combat trafficking in persons, especially pertaining to the building of permanent shelters and increased training. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (SBU) On January 29 Ambassador Bridgewater, POL Chief, DOJ Intermittent Legal Advisor (ILA), and Refugee Coordinator (RCO) met with Deputy Minister Dugen and MOWAC International Desk Director Marilyn Amponsah Annan. Dugen said that while the raid was successful, police and staff had been overwhelmed by the number of women and children in the shelter, as they had expected between 60-70 maximum, rather than 160. He acknowledged that some of the minor trafficking victims had left the shelter, with 14 remaining. [NOTE: The Interpol POC at the Ghana Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has confirmed to Post that there were 60 minor victims picked up at the raid. END NOTE].

¶13. (SBU) Concerning whether MOWAC had ensured that adequate arrangements to protect and care for the girls prior to the raid, Dep. Minister Dugen said that MOWAC had completed the necessary arrangements for the 60 minors that it expected to be rescued based upon police intelligence. He said MOWAC had been confident of its arrangements, but was surprised and overwhelmed when the actual number of women and girls greatly exceeded 60. Ms. Annan was present during the raid, and said that when she left the shelter at 0400 on January 19 the shelter was calm, no girls had left, and operations were going well. According to Annan, she believed that the situation changed quickly during the shift change of the police guards the next morning as there were fewer police officers on the scene. MOWAC is completing an after-action report and said it would provide the Embassy with a copy.

¶14. (SBU) Discussions then turned to what lessons could be learned to improve future operations. The GoG pointed to the need for permanent secure facilities in each region of Ghana, and will submit a proposal for possible funding. As ILA is currently conducting training for GoG law enforcement officials regarding combating trafficking in persons, we proposed expanding the training to include MOWAC officers involved in planning operations and other

relevant personnel. MOWAC expressed interest in this opportunity, and the Embassy will coordinate further with them. ILA is also working with the GoG regarding the prosecution of the 78 clients and the operators of the brothel.

Concern about EPAWA

15. (SBU) Deputy Minister Dugen also noted concern over the actions of Tatiana Kotlyarenko and her NGO "Enslavement Prevention Alliance - West Africa" (EPAWA). He noted that although EPAWA is registered with the Registrar General, they are not registered with the Department of Social Welfare (DSW); DSW has officially written to EPAWA to stop all activities. Dugen said he was not certain how Kotlyarenko became a member of the planning committee for the brothel raid, and complained that she had leaked information on the raid. He also said Kotlyarenko had made unfounded accusations to the media against his ministry following the raid. [NOTE: Media reports since the raid have been dominated by interagency finger-pointing regarding the missing minors. Dugen himself has been highly critical of Ms. Kotlyarenko and a Ghanaian journalist in radio interviews, accusing the journalist of distributing tapes of child victims engaged in prostitution. END NOTE]

16. (SBU) COMMENT: Notwithstanding the problems with the GOG's implementation of its first raid, the GOG has displayed a willingness to move forward to combat trafficking in persons and to provide appropriate protection to victims. Despite the lack of resources and capacity GoG is taking the issue seriously. Post has advised MOWAC to avoid becoming distracted by blame and politics and to focus on future operations. Their proposal to construct permanent shelters is a concrete step in developing capacity to protect trafficking victims, and additional training will help Ghana conduct these operations in an effective and timely manner. END COMMENT.

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